

# East Africa Health Policy and Research Organization

EA-HPRO



## EA-HPRO Fact Sheet »

November 2020

Across sub-Saharan Africa, around 550 women die every day from complications due to pregnancy or childbirth, and children under five are 16 times more likely to die than if they were born in high-income countries. Many of these deaths are preventable through stronger, more resilient, health systems. Access to quality care and data are areas that require investment, improvement and innovation to reduce maternal and child mortality rates.

For more information email [info@aphrc.org](mailto:info@aphrc.org)  
or visit the IMCHA website: [www.ea-imcha.com](http://www.ea-imcha.com)

# Who we are...

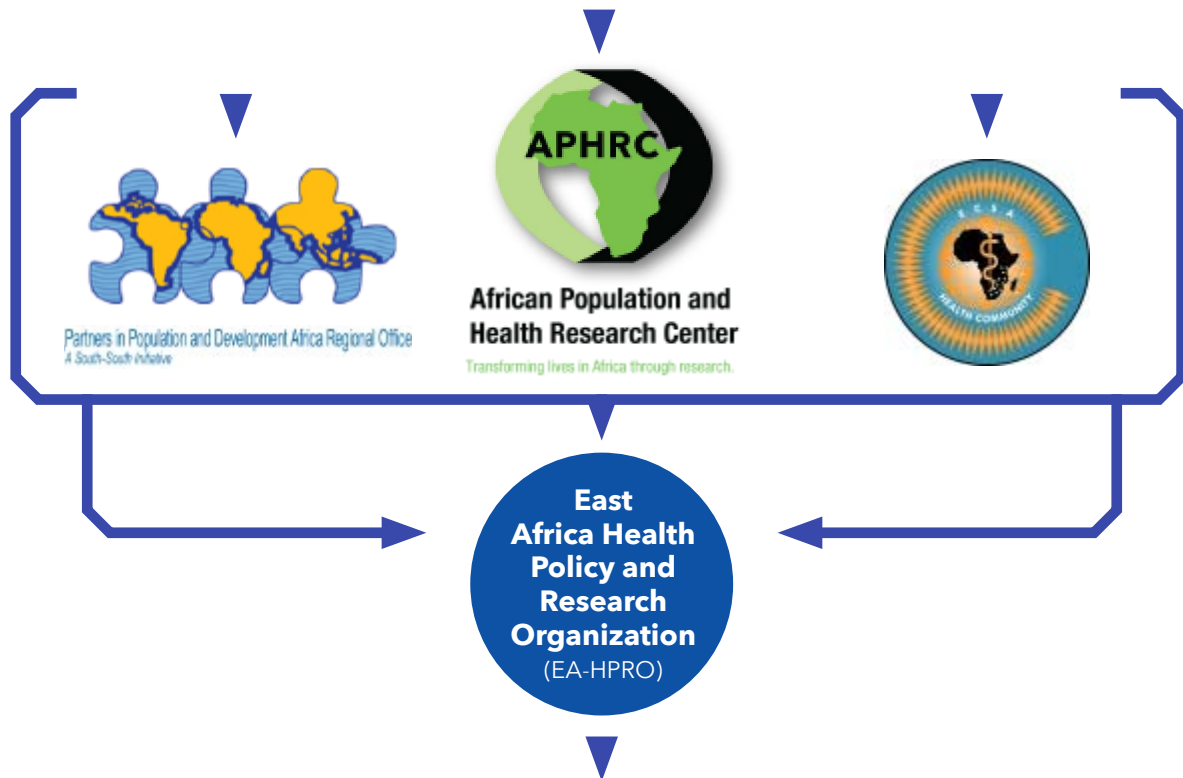
## The East Africa Health Policy and Research Organization (EA-HPRO)

is a consortium of three institutions:

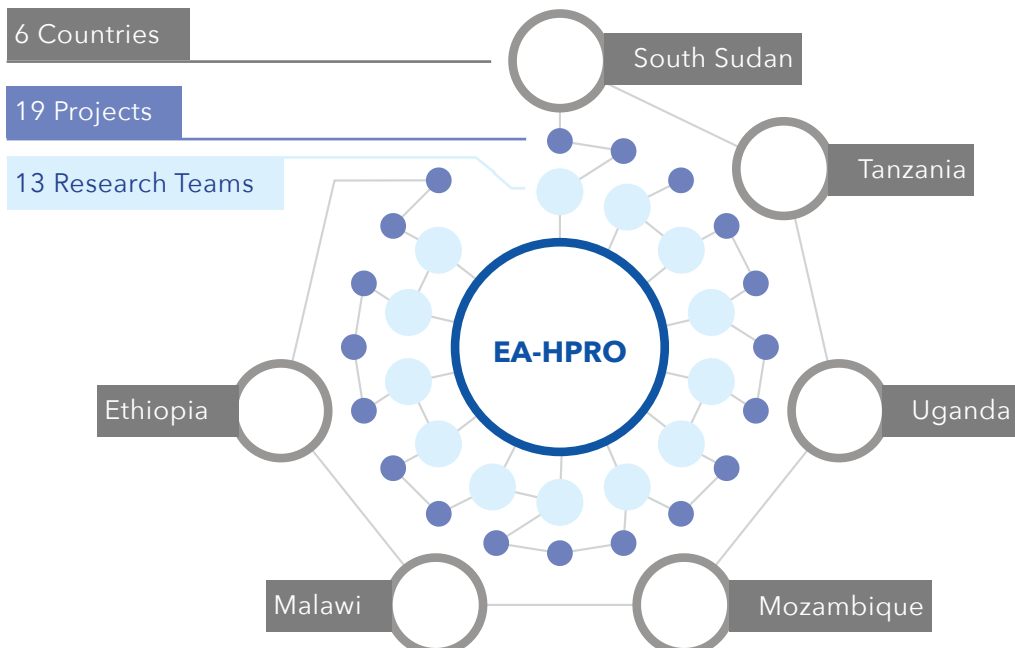
Partners in Population  
and Development Africa  
Regional Office -  
based in Uganda

African Population and  
Health Research Center -  
based in Kenya (Lead)

East, Central and Southern  
Africa Health Community -  
based in Tanzania



EA-HPRO works with 13 African and Canadian research teams  
on 19 research projects in six countries:



# Part of a global network

## EA-HPRO is part of the **Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa**

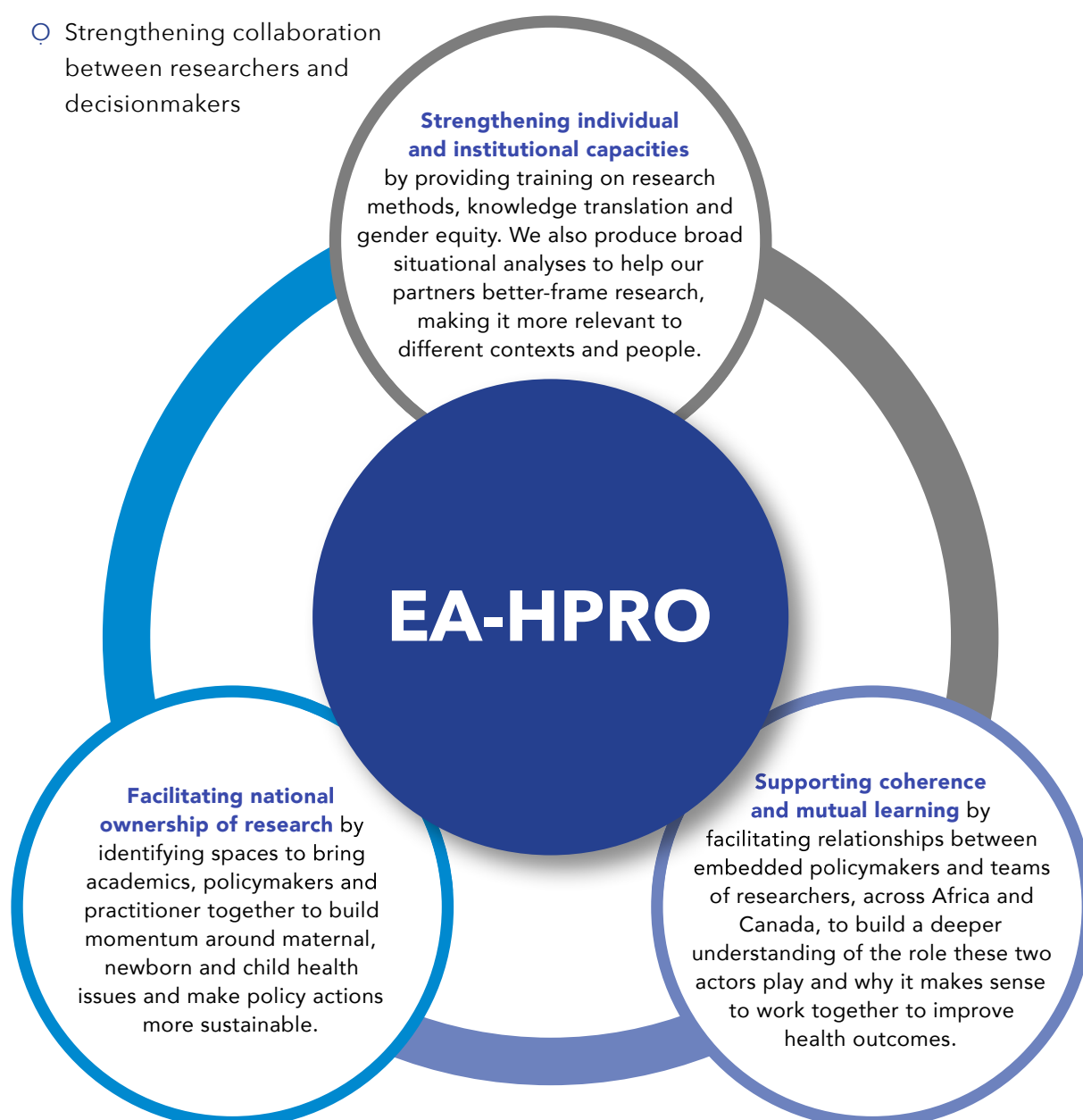
**Initiative** - a global health research network that aims to improve maternal, newborn and child health outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa by strengthening health systems, using primary health as an entry point. In practice, this means:

- Enhancing the use of robust evidence in policymaking
- Promoting research that is gender-sensitive and solutions-oriented
- Strengthening collaboration between researchers and decisionmakers

## Our specific role:

EA-HPRO's role is to make evidence more robust, support its translation into policy and practice and facilitate linkages with maternal, newborn and child health networks nationally and regionally.

## We do this by:







“

At the onset of the project agenda I was able to plot a space for discussion of newborn maternal health. I have been involved in development of material for presentation, guiding them on what to share and the language to use in sharing.” -- **Policymaker**

“

They don't just train us. They follow up. When you are writing a policy brief, for example, they offer to read and review which is very important. The brief and the blog that we produced is because of this coaching.” -- **Researcher**

# Snapshot of our key activities:

1

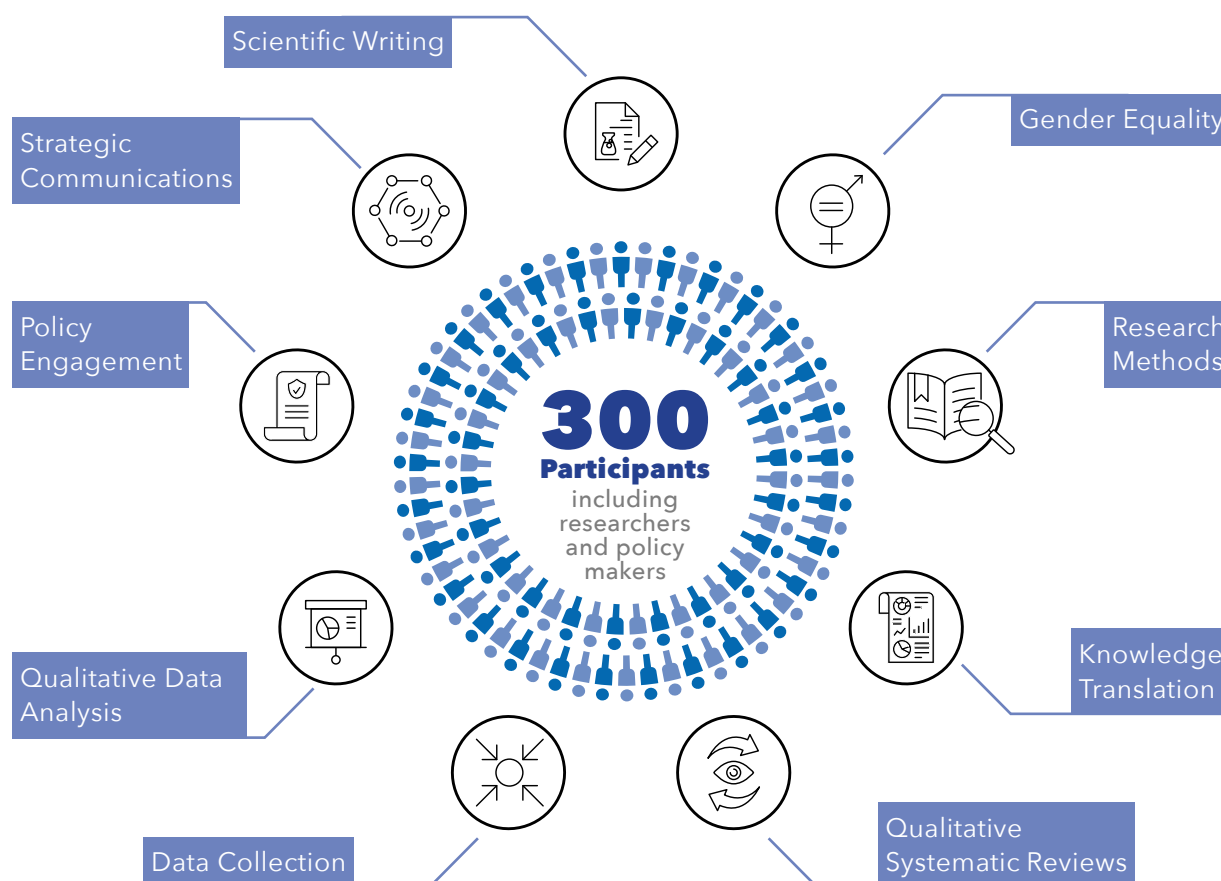
## EA-HPRO helped researchers gather and translate their evidence more effectively

To sharpen and further develop research capacity, we worked with research teams to identify key skills gaps and delivered training to meet these needs. Since 2016, we have held workshops on a range of topics to help researchers work better with qualitative data, conduct gender analyses, improve scientific writing skills and manage systematic reviews. We also trained researchers to communicate their findings more effectively, both in scientific journals and in more 'policy-friendly' formats.

This training has raised the standard of research in terms of data collection,

presentation and communication of evidence. It has also helped researchers engage more meaningfully with some of the more complex issues that affect maternal, newborn and child health, such as barrier to care and community engagement. For policymakers who participated, training helped them increase their awareness of the value and relevance of research.

In addition, we created an online interactive platform to allow our network of research teams to share resources including strategic communications tools, information on upcoming conferences, and knowledge translation products developed by research teams such as blogs, journal articles, and other publications.



# EA-HPRO's engagement in eastern and southern Africa



**6** Political economy analyses covering the national policy environment, barriers to accessing health services and equity concerns, as well as scoping of key actors in the maternal, newborn and child health space (all countries of operation)



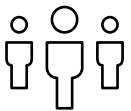
**6** National stakeholder consultation meetings (done as part of the political economy analyses work mentioned above)



**5** blogs/articles highlighting research in the sector



**5** Fact sheets



**300**

Training participants, which included researchers and policymakers



**12** stakeholder forums in collaboration with research teams at national and sub-national levels (all countries of operation)



**4** Infographics



**4** Videos/animations



**1** Photo story



Convened panels and side events in a range of regional and global forums:

- **Health Ministers Conference**
- **Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health**
- **Africa Health Agenda International Conference**
- **East Africa Reproductive Health Network**
- **Canadian Conference on Global Health**

The EA-HPRO has also supported research teams to develop policy briefs in Malawi and Uganda. This support and collaboration is ongoing.





## 2 EA-HPRO provided technical support to enable research teams to produce products to enhance knowledge translation

We used a collaborative model to enable research teams to develop quality communications products to facilitate the effective dissemination of their preliminary evidence around maternal, newborn and child health (see opposite page list of outputs).

## 3 EA-HPRO provided strategic inputs into high-level health summits

At the Health Ministers Conference, convened by the East, Central, Southern Africa - Health Community in 2018, we contributed to passing two critical action points to be implemented by 10 member states. One focused on strengthening health systems to advance respectful maternity care, while the other

dealt with monitoring and evaluation of reproductive, neonatal, maternal, adolescent and child health goals. High-level summits like this cover a huge range of health issues, and often fail to concentrate specifically on maternal, newborn and child health. Our strong evidence-based engagement with key actors played an important role in getting these issues on the agenda.

Realizing that resolutions were not being systematically monitored at the Health Ministers Conference, as well as at the Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health, we worked with these bodies to fill this gap. What was lacking was a central coordination mechanism to help countries involved in these summits track progress. We were able to bring this to the table. Our work is helping to pinpoint areas that are moving forward, as well as areas that are not progressing so well, enhancing accountability around maternal and child health outcomes.



## 4

## EA-HPRO worked with its embedded policymakers to refine policy engagement approaches

We leveraged the policymakers embedded in our research teams by gathering insights from them to help shape research and its dissemination. One of the specific ways we did this was through a 'policymakers survey', in collaboration with our counterpart consortium – the West African Health Organization. The findings from this and other ongoing engagement have helped us create stronger links between our research teams and the policymakers working with them. The survey results informed national policy engagement strategies and fed into our capacity building work as well.

## Looking ahead...

EA-HPRO has succeeded in creating and coordinating a large network of researchers, linking them to policy discussions at different levels, and delivering training to fill skills gaps. This work, as well as our support in designing and delivering policy-oriented materials, has helped raise awareness of research funded by the IMCHA Initiative and has also enhanced collaboration between researchers working on maternal, newborn and child health issues across the region. Through the various meetings convened and participation in key regional and global summits, we have also contributed to enhancing national ownership of research, which is starting to translate into tangible policy outcomes in our focus countries. ■

## Acknowledgement

The IMCHA Initiative is supported by a grant awarded through a partnership by Global Affairs Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and Canada's International Development Research Centre.

## Credits

The content for this fact sheet was primarily drawn from an evaluation of EA-HPRO, conducted by Southern Hemisphere in 2020. It was developed jointly by Southern Hemisphere and APHRC.



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